

A publication of the  
**National Wildfire  
Coordinating Group**

**National Wildfire Coordinating Group**

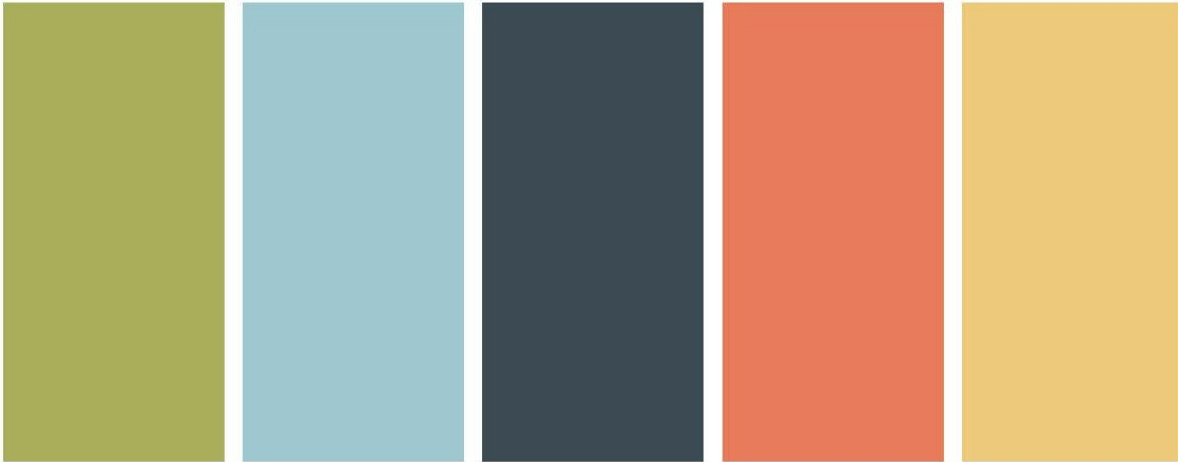
# **Operating Principles and Guidelines**



PMS 900

June 2014

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**nwcg**

# National Wildfire Coordinating Group Operating Principles and Guidelines

June 2014  
PMS 900

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide general, consistent and uniform guidance to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) organization for use in conducting its business. This document is established for this purpose in the NWCG charter, dated 19 November 2013.

The information contained herein is applicable to the NWCG organization that includes its executive board, staff, committees, and all other groups or subgroups.

Furthermore, the operating principles and guidelines are intended to result in predictable and consistent organizational behavior. They provide the foundation for repeatable business practices shared by all NWCG groups, thus eliminating the inefficiencies of each group developing its own processes.

This document will be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure the guidance is always timely and relevant to the operations of the NWCG organization.

## NWCG STRATEGIC MISSION

NWCG provides national leadership to develop, maintain, and communicate interagency standards, guidelines, qualifications, training, and other capabilities that enable interoperable operations among federal and non-federal entities. NWCG will facilitate implementation of approved standards, guidelines, qualifications and training.

### NWCG Strategic Guiding Principles

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**COST EFFECTIVENESS:** We believe the wise and efficient use of funds is a high priority, therefore, we will consider and evaluate the costs associated with implementing NWCG's objectives.

**INTERAGENCY COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION & COOPERATION:** We believe that interagency communication, coordination and cooperation are vital to the effective and efficient use of the nation's wildland fire management resources; therefore, we will base our actions on the collective needs and capabilities of the interagency community.

**LEADERSHIP:** We believe effective wildland fire management is the result of leadership at all levels therefore we will provide and promote leadership throughout all NWCG activities.

**TRUST & INTEGRITY:** We believe trust and integrity are inherent to the success of the NWCG, therefore deliberations will be open and transparent and we will honor, respect, and support the decisions of the NWCG.

**RESPECT:** We believe in mutual respect for the differences in member organizations' responsibilities, missions, and capabilities, therefore, NWCG decisions represent a consensus and are supported by all.

**EXCELLENCE:** We believe in excellence throughout all NWCG activities, therefore, we are deliberative in our decision-making process and are accountable for our actions.

### NWCG Goals

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**QUALIFICATIONS, STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES:** Develop and maintain wildland fire program management standards and guidelines through collaborative interagency processes; make them available to wildland fire organizations; and encourage their adoption and use in wildland fire programs.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** Evaluate interagency wildland fire workforce; identify gaps and needs; and set interagency staffing goals for use by wildland fire programs.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Foster better understanding, acceptance and support of wildland fire and related wildland fire programs and concepts.

**NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR WILDLAND FIRE:** Differences in federal, state, tribal and local policies are recognized at all levels of wildland fire organizations; adaptations in fire management are incorporated locally.

**NWCG PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION & DELIVERY:** Wildland fire agencies and cooperators share common business practices for wildland fire programs.

**INCIDENT MANAGEMENT:** Wildland fire organizations respond to, manage and support incidents safely, seamlessly and efficiently



## NWCG ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

The NWCG is a collaborative and cooperative partnership of federal governmental agencies, the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the Intertribal Timber Council with national responsibilities for wildland fire management.

The NWCG provides national leadership to develop, maintain, and communicate interagency standards, guidelines, qualifications, training, and other capabilities that enable interoperable operations among federal and non-federal entities. NWCG will facilitate implementation of approved standards, guidelines, qualifications and training.

The NWCG organization consists of an Executive Board, its staff, and a subordinate hierarchy of subgroups. Subgroups may be committees, subcommittees, units, subunits, boards, or task teams. This organizational structure has been developed to establish consistency, provide appropriate span of control, reduce duplication of activities, increase horizontal and vertical coordination, enhance communications, optimize technical expertise, and improve decision-making processes.

Group members, including those of the Executive Board, Committees, and other subgroups, perform NWCG roles as a collateral duty. The Program Management Unit staff is the only full time employees of the organization. (Appendix A, NWCG Organization Chart)

### NWCG Executive Board

NWCG Executive Board is a permanent body chartered by the Fire Executive Council, NASF Fire Committee and the Intertribal Timber Council. (Appendix B, NWCG Charter)

### Program Management Unit

The NWCG Program Management Unit is a permanent group established to manage, coordinate and support the NWCG organization.

### Subgroup Types

#### Committees

A committee is a long-standing body chartered by the Executive Board. A committee's primary purpose is to serve as the stewards of the business and data relating to an exclusive set of one or more of NWCG's functional business areas. A committee may serve as a business lead or subject matter expert relating to applications and technologies designed to meet business needs.

A committee is formed with a charter, signed by the Executive Board chair. If workload demands, a committee may delegate segments of its stewardship responsibilities to one or more subcommittees.

## Subcommittees

A subcommittee is a long-standing body of subject matter experts (SMEs chartered by a committee. A subcommittee is delegated the stewardship responsibilities for a subset of its sponsor's functional business areas.

A subcommittee is formed via a charter, signed by its sponsoring committee's chair, with a concurrent signature from the designated branch coordinator.

## Units

A unit is a long-standing body of individuals organized to perform a specific set of business services or to maintain a specific set of products.

Units may be formed by the Executive Board. Units may also be formed by committees, subcommittees, or other groups, if authorized to do so in their charters.

Units can be formed through a variety of mechanisms (memoranda of understanding (MOU), memoranda of agreement (MOA), service level agreements (SLA), charter, etc.) to perform services or maintain products for one or more NWCG groups. A unit must have a designated leader. If workload demands, a unit may create subunits to perform subsets of its service offerings.

## Subunits

A subunit is a long-standing body of individuals organized by a unit to handle a subset of its undertakings.

A subunit can be formed by a unit, if so authorized, via a variety of mechanisms (MOU, MOA, SLA, charter, etc.) to perform services or maintain products for one or more NWCG groups. Subunits are not allowed to form any long-standing subordinate groups.

## Boards

A board is a special type of unit chartered specifically to filter proposals or provide operational advice for their sponsoring body.

Boards may be chartered by the Executive Board. Boards may also be chartered by committees, subcommittees, or other groups if authorized to do so in their charters.

Boards provide advice and/or maintain change prioritization criteria for specific NWCG business areas, meet as needed, and may be delegated the decisional authority to recommend or reject proposals. Boards are not allowed to form any long-standing subordinate groups.

## **Task Teams**

A task team is a body of individuals formed via a tasking agreement or project charter to accomplish a specific time-bounded undertaking for their sponsoring body.

A task team can be established by any NWCG group, if authorized to do so in their establishing documents. Task teams are not allowed to form any long-standing subordinate groups. Project teams are a type of task team, but are required to be created by a charter and must have a designated project manager.

## **Establishing Subgroups**

All formal NWCG groups shall have some form of establishing documentation. Committees and subcommittees must be established through a charter. Other subgroup types may be established through various documents including, but not limited to, charters, memoranda of understanding, memoranda of agreement, service level agreements, and/or tasking memoranda.

The Executive Board shall approve the establishment of all committees. The Executive Board also shall approve the establishment of other subgroups immediately subordinate to the Executive Board. The Executive Board chair shall sign all committee charters and the establishing documents for any subgroups immediately subordinate to the Executive Board.

Establishing documents for all other subgroups shall be approved and signed by the parent group chair and must have concurrence of the respective branch coordinator.

For assistance with the preparation and approval of charters and other establishing documents, contact a branch coordinator.

## **Decommissioning Subgroups**

Every NWCG group is responsible for ensuring its subgroups are relevant and contributing to the fulfillment of the group's mission. If a subgroup is no longer relevant or needed, it is the responsibility of the respective parent group to properly decommission that subgroup.

Only the establishing parent group and the NWCG Executive Board have the authority to decommission a subgroup. (Appendix C, Decommission Checklist and Template).

A group shall be decommissioned when:

- The group's mission has been completed.
- The functionality of the group has been subsumed by another group.
- The group is no longer relevant to the needs or mission of the NWCG.
- The group's activities no longer align to the NWCG strategic direction.

Only the establishing parent group and the NWCG Executive Board have the authority to decommission a subgroup. (Appendix C, Decommission Checklist and Template).

## Members & Positions

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### Executive Board Membership

NWCG Executive Board consists of a decision-making membership (primary members) and an advisory membership (associate members).

Executive Board membership is limited to the organizations specified in the NWCG charter. Accordingly, membership is limited to one individual representative from each of the following member organizations:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- Intertribal Timber Council
- National Association of State Foresters
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fire Administration
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service, Fire and Aviation Management
- U.S. Forest Service, Wildland Fire Management Research, Development, and Application

The Director of the Office of Wildland Fire in the Department of the Interior may appoint a representative to serve as an *ex officio* member of the NWCG in order to provide liaison and coordination with respect to development of proposed standards, policies, guidelines, or other materials that may require review or approval before becoming Department of the Interior policy.

### Primary Members

Primary members are those organizations listed above and are considered the decision-making members of the NWCG Executive Board.

Primary member agencies and organizations have national-level authority and responsibility to address wildland fire management issues and initiate actions to improve coordination and integration of state, tribal, local and federal wildland fire programs.

Primary member agencies and organizations must be able to demonstrate their inclusion is value added for the development and maintenance of interagency standards, guidelines, training, and qualifications for use in wildland fire operations.

Primary members have a shared value for firefighter and public safety as an organizational priority.

Primary member agencies and organizations must be able to demonstrate their inclusion presents no conflict of interest.

## **Associate Members**

The Executive Board may confer associate membership to other groups or entities that have expertise, interests, or resources that may help the mission of NWCG. Each associate member organization is limited to one individual member representative. Associate member representatives participate in discussions, but do not participate in decision making.

Current associate member organizations:

- Australia/New Zealand Forest Fire Management Group (ANZ FFMG)
- DOI Office of Wildland Fire

## **Non-Member Participation**

Individuals may be asked to participate in an Executive Board meeting or activity. Such individuals may be asked to represent an agency or organization, or may be asked to participate as a subject matter expert, advisor or consultant based on their knowledge and expertise.

Such participation does not confer membership. Such individuals serve at the request of the Executive Board chair. The chair and the participant must ensure there is no conflict of interest

## **Executive Board Leadership**

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The Executive Board will rotate, from among its primary members, a chair and vice chair to serve a minimum term of two (2) years. Executive Board members moving into the rotating positions will be notified at the October meeting; terms of service begin in January of the following calendar year. Generally, nominations of the chair-candidate and vice chair-candidate are rotated to avoid overlap with chair roles for the National Multi-Agency

Coordination Group and the federal Fire Management Board. The PMU will maintain a rotation schedule for NWCG Chair.

## Chair

The chair calls and conducts meetings, establishes subgroups of the NWCG Executive Board, submits NWCG recommendations to member agencies and other entities for action, and signs NWCG correspondence and memoranda.

A six month transition period between chairs will help ensure a seamless transition. Beginning in October, following election, the chair-elect will shadow the chair for three months. Beginning with the new term in January, the past chair will serve as an advisor to the new chair for three months.

## Vice Chair

The vice chair is responsible for serving as chair in the chair's absence and for performing delegated duties. When the chair is absent from a meeting or unable to perform the duties of the chair, the vice chair assumes the full authority and responsibility of the chair.

## Liaisons

NWCG Executive Board members serve as NWCG Liaisons for internal groups and external agencies and organizations. Individual Board members volunteer for many of these liaisons roles based on overlap with their role as a liaison for NMAC or because of expertise in a business area.

With an external agency or organization, the role of the liaison is to represent NWCG's interests and to keep the Executive Board apprised of the entity's interests and activities. The liaison may also identify opportunities for NWCG to work collaboratively with the external entity on issues of mutual interest and that meet the NWCG mission and goals. The liaison may participate in a group's meetings as a way of staying current and identifies opportunities for routine briefings or updates to the group regarding NWCG's activities.

An Executive Board member is appointed as a liaison to each of the NWCG branches. A liaison may also be appointed to subgroups immediately subordinate to the Executive Board.

The NWCG Administrative Assistant will maintain a current roster of appointed liaisons.

## Subgroup Membership

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To maximize effectiveness, a subgroup's membership should provide knowledgeable representation of business area expertise with equitable NWCG member organization

participation. Candidate members will be nominated by the constituent business areas/groups, coordinated by the branch coordinators.

Agencies will select their respective member representatives with full acknowledgement of the collateral duties and potential impacts to agency work and the employee's workload.

NWCG Executive Board members shall not serve as members of NWCG subgroups, with one exception: an Executive Board member may serve as a representative of the Executive Board on a task team chartered by the Executive Board.

The NWCG Executive Board will approve the member rosters of all NWCG committees and any subgroups immediately subordinate to the Executive Board. Rosters of all other subgroups shall be approved by the respective parent group leads/chairs with the concurrence of the respective branch coordinator.

Each member agency may individually determine the need for agency participation in a subgroup's membership. A member agency may appoint an agency employee to serve as exclusive representative for the agency, or may coordinate with one or more other agencies to have a single person equally represent multiple agencies.

Contractors shall not be primary or associate members of any NWCG group. However, they may serve at the request of a group's chair for a limited time as subject matter experts for specific topics. Contractors will not participate in decision making.

Subgroup membership shall be invited from agencies and organizations having the expertise and interest in the particular subject matter or business area of the subgroup. Agencies or organizations that are not NWCG members may be allowed membership on a subgroup with the approval of the Executive Board (for committees or subgroups immediately subordinate to the Executive Board) or the branch coordinators (for subgroups below committees.) Candidate member organizations must be able to demonstrate their inclusion is value added and presents no conflict of interest.

A group's membership composition will be documented in the Membership section of the group's Organization Intent document.

## **Primary Members**

Members participating in decision making are termed "primary members". No agency or organization shall have more than one primary membership on an NWCG group. Exceptions may be considered by the Executive Board based on justification from a group chair. Exceptions may be based on such criteria as:

- Need for subject matter expertise specific to a geographic area or ecosystem type.
- Expertise or skills not normally available within the fire management organizations' personnel (i.e. social scientists, technical equipment specialist, etc).

When more than one primary member is appointed from a single agency or organization, the member representatives will have one voice in the decision discussion.

## **Associate Members**

Members participating in discussions, but not in decision making, are termed "associate members". A group or entity may be represented by more than one associate membership on an NWCG group; typically, such memberships would represent different business areas, expertise, or resources that are of help to the mission of the group. Membership in the group must add demonstrable value and must not present a conflict of interest nor an appearance thereof.

Rationale for associate membership on a group will be documented in the membership section of the group's intent document.

## **Non-member Participation**

Individuals may be asked to participate in a group meeting or activity. Such individuals may be asked to represent an agency or organization, or may be asked to participate as a subject matter expert, advisor or consultant based on their knowledge and expertise.

Such participation does not confer membership. Such individuals serve at the request of the group chair. The chair and the participant must ensure there is no conflict of interest or appearance thereof.

## **Subgroup Leadership**

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### **Chairs**

The NWCG Executive Board will appoint all chairs of committees. The NWCG Executive Board also will appoint all chairs of other subgroups immediately subordinate to the Executive Board. The Executive Board may, at its discretion, request recommendations or nominations for chairs from the groups or branch coordinators.

For all other subgroups, chairs will be appointed by the respective parent groups. At the discretion of the parent group, a chair appointment may be based on recommendations from the subgroup members. Subgroup chairs may be selected from primary or associate members, unless a parent group has chosen to restrict the selection to only primary or only associate membership.



## Vice Chairs

It may be determined that a vice chair is needed to assist with the leadership of a group.

The NWCG Executive Board will appoint all vice chairs of committees. The NWCG Executive Board also will appoint all vice chairs of other subgroups immediately subordinate to the Executive Board. The Executive Board may, at its discretion, request recommendations or nominations for vice chair from the groups or branch coordinators.

For all other subgroups, a vice chairs will be appointed by their respective parent group. At the discretion of the parent group, a vice chair appointment may be based on recommendations from the subgroup members. Subgroup vice chairs may be selected from primary or associate members, unless a parent group has chosen to restrict the selection to only primary or only associate membership.

## NWCG Program Management Unit Positions

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The Program Management Unit (PMU) is an office of interagency NWCG positions responsible for supporting the operations of the NWCG organization.

### NWCG Program Manager

Serves as administrator for the NWCG Staff:

- Manages business operations.
- Formulates long and short-term strategies to meet NWCG objectives.
- Supervises and manages workload of the Program Management Unit (PMU) positions that includes:
  - NWCG Administrative Assistant
  - Branch Coordinators
  - Training Branch Manager
  - Communication Specialist
  - Products Coordinator
  - Webmaster and support position

### NWCG Administrative Assistant

- Records the actions and decisions of the NWCG Executive Board
- Distributes minutes to committees and subgroups
- Posts decisions, actions and NWCG memoranda to the NWCG website
- Assists the NWCG Executive Board chair and NWCG Manager with organizing and preparing for Executive Board meetings

- Supports the functions of the Program Management Unit

### **Branch Coordinators/Branch Manager**

NWCG committees are grouped into virtual "branches". For each branch, a branch coordinator position exists to provide enhanced programmatic efficiencies. Branch coordinators serve to represent the business of their committees to the Executive Board, and the direction of the Executive Board to the committees. The Training Branch has a Branch Manager overseeing the training development staff.

For the NWCG Executive Board, branch coordinators:

- Draft tasking memoranda
- Draft briefings for meetings.
- Evaluate the readiness of presentations, proposals and requests.
- Facilitate creation of committee products.
- Facilitate creation and maintenance of committee and subgroup information, including charters, intents, and rosters.  
Help to refine NWCG structures and processes.
- Coordinate between branches.
- Mentor committee chairs
- Participate in committee meetings as appropriate
- Manage special projects as assigned.

### **Products Manager**

- Develops and maintains NWCG product inventory.
- Develops annual product development schedule.
- Coordinates product development services with committees.
- Coordinates with and supports committees' development efforts.

### **Communication Specialist**

- Develops NWCG quarterly newsletters and posts them to the website.
- Oversees content of communication products and documents on the NWCG home page on the website.
- Coordinates and updates key communication products such as key messages and questions and answers.
- Develops and updates Executive Board briefing materials.
- Develops the communication strategy, plans, and products for NWCG Task Teams under the Executive Board, as requested.

- Assists NWCG staff with accessibility of documents and products to be posted to the NWCG website.
- Assists in the design, development, and presentation of NWCG e-Share materials.
- Designs, implements, and facilitates e-Share sessions, conference calls and meetings, as requested.

## Web Manager

- Collaborates with and supports stakeholders in developing and maintaining a web presence.
- Provides training to contributors.
- Manages web content, including posting files, editing pages, troubleshooting and testing
- Facilitates resolution of production issues and bugs.
- Interacts with the user community by responding to inquiries and handling customer service issues.

## Coordination

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Group activities, products, projects, or recommendations that may affect other groups must be coordinated with those groups. The concurrence of the involved groups will be evident and documented prior to presentation to the Executive Board (or subgroup's parent group) for approval or implementation.

Taskings, originating as action items, flow from the Executive Board to branch coordinators and the Training Branch Manager; the NWCG Manager is informed as a courtesy. Branch coordinators and the Training Branch Manager work with the NWCG Manager as needed, for further coordination.

## Branch Coordination

Branch coordinators provide the first-level liaison functionality to committees. For each committee, the liaison role of the branch coordinator is to:

- Receive a tasking from the Executive Board, track the progress of each tasking from beginning to end, and keep appropriate Executive Board liaison updated on the progress of a tasking(s).
- Review and screen Executive Board agenda requests from the committee.
- Balance committee workload and resolve priority conflicts and optimize efforts between committees.

- Review performance of committee and subcommittee members, assure and maintain appropriate scope and effectiveness of committee projects, and ensures committee projects are completed and timely.
- Provide assistance to a committee and its subgroups in preparing briefings for Executive Board reviews.
- Review and receive communications between the Executive Board and the committee.
- Keep the NWCG Manager informed of significant activities.
- Keep the committee informed of Executive Board deliberations, decisions and direction.
- Provide monthly updates of committee activity to the Executive Board.

The branch coordinators work closely with each other to ensure constant coordination among the branches and to ensure interaction and communication among committees and their subgroups. Each branch coordinator has also been assigned, and works with, an NWCG Executive Board liaison to help facilitate the business of the NWCG.

This structured coordination is intended to facilitate the ability of committees (or other groups) and their chairs to communicate directly and efficiently among themselves or with NWCG Executive Board members when necessary. Branch coordinators represent committees' concerns and issues to the Executive Board. The Training Branch Manager serves as the interim Training Branch Coordinator

## Liaisons

NWCG Executive Board liaisons are assigned to serve as points of contact between the Executive Board and branch coordinators. The liaison assignments will be reviewed annually and adjusted as needed.

Subgroups, in collaboration with other subgroups, may designate members to serve as liaisons between the groups.

## Stewardship

Stewardship is the act of fulfilling delegated responsibilities for applying leadership, knowledge and expertise to the issues, matters, or concerns relevant to an assigned wildland fire business area.

NWCG was formed to provide national leadership for the establishment, maintenance, and constant improvement of, standards, and guidelines for wildland fire program management. To that end, NWCG has established a number of groups in which wildland fire management standards can be developed to address interoperability issues.

Stewardship groups provide the fundamental underpinning necessary to constantly monitor and improve the wildland fire program. NWCG committees are assigned responsibility for stewardship over one or more areas of NWCG and wildland fire business. A committee may delegate some stewardship responsibilities to one or more subcommittees, if so authorized in their charter. Subcommittees cannot further delegate their stewardship responsibilities to any subordinate groups.

## NWCG PLANNING

### Strategic Planning

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Through strategic planning, the NWCG Executive Board sets the overall vision for the organization, identifies the key strategies to achieve the vision, and establishes the critical measures to monitor progress.

The NWCG Strategic Plan will contain the NWCG's vision of the future, mission statement, guiding principles and NWCG goals. Each of the identified goals will have a set of objectives, critical success factors, and barriers. The final component of the strategic plan is a set of prioritized strategies.

The current NWCG Strategic Plan is available online at <http://www.nwcg.gov>.

### Strategic Planning Principles

- The NWCG Strategic Plan is developed for a 5 to 10 year timeframe.
- The NWCG Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually for needed updates by the Executive Board.
- Committees and subcommittees may develop their own strategic plans that supports NWCG's strategic plan.

### Prioritization of Strategies

The Executive Board will prioritize the strategies based on impact on vision, probability of success, and cost effectiveness. The prioritized NWCG strategies form the basis of the NWCG Executive Board, staff, and group annual work plans.

### Work Planning

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Much of the work of the NWCG is carried out through the efforts of the NWCG groups. The objectives of each group must be consistent with objectives of the NWCG, its members, and the agencies and organizations they represent.

In order for a group to effectively meet the needs of its parent group and the NWCG Executive Board, and to secure the funds necessary to carry out their work, the group should have a plan that sets its direction. These plans include tactical plans to complete the core business of the NWCG groups, developing budget proposals and completing taskings.

### Tactical Planning

Tactical planning includes the core business of standards, products and training.

Committees are stewards of NWCG standards and are responsible for creating, maintaining, or revising these standards.

Once a year, committees review and update their products list. This includes identifying new products being developed, review and revision status of existing products, review comments, and any other information needed. This schedule is used to help plan and support their work for the next year and any needed budget requests to complete the product.

In the spring of each year, at the same time the NWCG budget proposals are due, committees are required to submit annual updates of those training courses for which they are the stewards. These updates are used to help the committee and subgroups plan course revisions based on needs.

## Budget

NWCG funds come from federal agencies fire management program allocation. The percent each agency invests is negotiated and documented in a memorandum of understanding. Annually the U.S. Fire Administration determines their level of investment and their program emphasis. NWCG funding is determined during the regular federal wildland fire budget cycle and is conveyed to the Program Management Unit (PMU) by the NWCG Budget Advisory Unit (BAU). Because the federal budget cycle is two years ahead of the current fiscal year, the cap for NWCG spending for any fiscal year is initially established as an estimate two years earlier. Adjustments to this estimate may occur during the following year.

The PMU is responsible for providing annual program budget guidance and process direction to the NWCG organization. The guidance and direction is developed in partnership with the BAU with input from committees. Annual program budget guidance provides a framework to fund appropriate projects to meet NWCG goals in a cost-effective manner. Only projects that are within the scope and meet the goals of NWCG are recommended to the Executive Board for funding. The NWCG budget process is reviewed and updated as needed based on guidance from the Executive Board, user feedback and lessons learned.

To be considered for NWCG funding, committees are required to submit annual budget requests for new and recurring projects. Quarterly project expenditure reports are required for all funded projects reporting on specific accomplishments and fund expenditures.

The branch coordinators, the Training Branch Manager, and the BAU monitor NWCG expenditures on a quarterly basis. Funds that are not obligated or spent by April may be re-allocated to another project. The Executive Board, based on recommendations from the PMU and BAU will determine where to reallocate the unspent funds following mid-year and third quarter budget reviews.

## General Budget Timeline

Specific dates are identified in the annual budget guidance.

- **February:** NWCG budget guidance released
- **April:** Budget requests due to branch coordinators (NWCG Budget Request Form)
- **April/May:** Branch coordinators, Training Branch Manager, and BAU review proposals and draft the NWCG budget
- **June:** NWCG Executive Board discusses and gives preliminary approval of draft budget
- **October thru January:** Following enactment of agency appropriation NWCG approves final budget and project list

## State Travel

Travel funding will be provided, within the limits of the available funding, for state employees to travel to and from group meetings. All state group members must submit and have an approved Request for Travel Authorization on file prior to making travel reservations. Committees do not request state travel funds for committee/subcommittee meetings in the annual budget process.

## Federal Travel

Federal travel costs are not supported by NWCG funds.

All federal agencies are currently operating under travel caps. This limits the ability of federal members to travel.

NWCG groups should give strong consideration to budget impacts when planning how to accomplish their program of work and associated tasks. All groups should take advantage of other methods (for example electronic means such as webinars, teleconferences) to meet their work objectives when an in-person meeting is not an option due to funding issues.

## Training Request Process

The NWCG Training Branch Manager, in collaboration with the Training Committee is responsible for reviewing training-related budget proposals. This includes course assessments, new training proposals, maintenance or revisions of existing courses, and digital training media. Funding requests for NWCG sponsored training, submitted through any other channels will not be considered for NWCG funding.

The NWCG Training Branch Manager and Training Committee, reviews all submitted NWCG training budget requests to validate they are within the scope of NWCG training. The Training Branch Manager will work with the Training Committee to prioritize all submitted training



requests (with input from branch coordinators) based upon considerations identified in the annual budget guidance. The Training Branch Manager provides the prioritized list to the PMU for inclusion with other budget requests.

NWCG Committees and subgroups with Category A course maintenance responsibilities are required to submit documentation regarding their course to the Training Branch Manager annually. This documentation is used to justify the training budget requests. More information can be found at [http://training.nwcg.gov/sect\\_Training\\_Curriculum\\_%20Maintenance\\_Plan.htm](http://training.nwcg.gov/sect_Training_Curriculum_%20Maintenance_Plan.htm).

## **Information Technology**

As currently chartered to develop and maintain intergovernmental wildland fire standards for interoperability, NWCG cannot fund and implement Information Technology (IT) applications. Any system that needs or shares data is considered IT.

In the past, several NWCG groups have received NWCG funds to develop and maintain IT applications used by the interagency community. In 2015, groups will request funding as described in the budget guidance to ensure continuity of operations.

IT projects will be reviewed by the NWCG Executive Board, submitted to the Fire Management Board (FMB), reviewed by the Wildland Fire Information & Technology (WFIT) Program Board, and approved by the Wildland Fire IT Executive Board. Host agencies will be responsible for implementation of these applications.

Project status, life-cycle stage, and other similar IT investments are some of the areas that are considered by the WFIT FMB and Program Board as they review the portfolio of Wildland Fire IT investments in a holistic manner.

Consultation with the WFIT Program Board representatives is recommended in order to coordinate business needs with technical solutions.

## **Area of Emphasis**

Every year Emphasis Areas are revised based on strategic direction identified by the Executive Board and will be included in the annual budget guidance.

## **NWCG Project Proposal Process**

All projects being considered for NWCG funding must be submitted on the NWCG Budget Request Form. This form could change yearly with the annual NWCG Budget Guidance. For the most current budget form, questions or requests for assistance, please contact the appropriate branch coordinator or the Training Branch Manager.

NWCG products proposed for updates or revisions must be coordinated with the respective Branch Coordinator before requesting NWCG budget funds.

## **Project Expenditure Reports**

Quarterly reports are required for every NWCG funded project at mid-year (April), third quarter (July), and end of year (November) on specific accomplishments and funds expended.

Quarterly reports include the following information:

- Accomplishments
- Funds Expended
- Excess Funds
- Additional Funds Needed
- Purpose of Additional Funds

A review is conducted by the branch coordinators, the Training Branch Manager, NWCG Manager, and the BAU at midyear and third quarter to determine if the funded projects are on schedule to be completed, need to be revised based on new information, and determine if any assistance is needed by the committees or project leads.

Submitted projects may be approved but not funded due to insufficient funds available to NWCG. The NWCG Executive Board may approve reallocation of funds to unfunded approved projects or partially funded projects. Excess funds may also be used to fund projects that requested additional funds at midyear or third quarter.

The end of year report identifies completed and uncompleted projects, project accomplishments, and total funds expended to complete the projects.

The information in these reports is also used during the next fiscal year's budget selection process. One of the criteria used to evaluate budget proposals for funding is successful past performance and includes evaluating prior year's budget management and project accomplishments.

## **Budget Roles & Responsibilities**

### **NWCG Executive Board**

- Approve and issue annual NWCG Budget Guidance.
- Approve annual NWCG projects to be funded.
- Approve midyear and third quarter requests based on recommendations from the PMU and BAU.

### **Budget Advisory Unit**

- Execute the budget process.
- Work with the branch coordinators and Training Branch Manager to resolve any issues identified in the budget review process.
- Agency facilitating the funds distribution will prepare the NWCG Shared Costs Spreadsheet.
- Monitor committee/project expenditures quarterly at mid-year, third quarter, and end-of-year; advise the branch coordinators and Training Branch Manager of concerns.
- Review prioritized project list and identify concerns/issues to the PMU.
- Work with the branch coordinators and Training Branch Manager, and the NWCG Manager to develop recommendations for the Executive Board for modifications to committee or project funds.
- Comply with budget timelines.
- Determine funding available for annual NWCG allocations by Agency.
- Assist PMU with development of the NWCG Budget Guidance.
- Advise all agencies budget personnel annually of NWCG budget allocations.
- Assist in review of results and recommendations to NWCG Executive Board for any changes based on committee and other reports at mid-year and third quarter accomplishment reports.
- Collaborate with the PMU to provide recommendations to the Executive Board regarding unexpended current year funds and allocation adjustments of these funds at mid-year and third quarter.
- Advise PMU and Executive Board of project funds not obligated by April each fiscal year which may be rescinded or re-allocated.
- Monitor expenditures monthly beginning in April (mid-year) each fiscal year.

#### NWCG Budget Liaison

- Maintain all budget project files for the NWCG Staff.
- Key contact for PMU budget processes.
- Develop annual budget guidance, template for NWCG project requests, and execution tracking with assistance from the branch coordinators, Training Branch Manager, NWCG Manager, and BAU.

#### Program Management Unit (PMU)

- Develop annual budget guidance to committees and other NWCG sponsored projects and programs.
- Prioritize projects submitted through the branch coordinators and Training Branch Manager.

- Annually, in collaboration with the BAU and committees, recommend projects for funding to the NWCG Executive Board.
- Review mid-year, third quarter and end of year accomplishment reports.
- Collaborate with the BAU to provide recommendations to the Executive Board regarding unexpended current year funds and allocation adjustments of these funds at mid-year and third quarter.
- Branch Coordinators and Training Branch Manager
- Assist in development of annual budget guidance and budget template for NWCG project requests with the budget liaison, Training Branch Manager, BAU, and NWCG Manager
- Assist committees with questions on budget and direct to appropriate agency budget contact as needed.
- Provide guidance to committee chairs on how to complete the NWCG budget process.
- Receive committee funding requests.
- Facilitate branch board prioritization of all projects submitted within the branch.
- Annually advise committees of approved projects.
- Collaborate with other branch coordinators, Training Branch Manager and NWCG Manager to prioritize annual funding requests, and mid-year and third quarter adjustments.
- Identify if there is overlap within requests and rectify them.
- Monitor accomplishment reports through-out the year for committee's in relation to their program of work.
- Receive mid-year, third quarter, and end of year accomplishment reports from committees and subgroups.
- Collaborate with the BAU to provide recommendations to the Executive Board regarding unexpended current year funds and allocation adjustments of these funds at mid-year and third quarter.
- Monitor committee expenditure of funds and/or accomplishments.

#### Committee Chairs

- Follow specific processes to get prior approval for projects that include: training and publications.
- Develop project request.
- Prioritize projects within committee and subgroups.
- Submit prioritized requests on the NWCG budget template to the appropriate branch coordinator or Training Branch Manager.

- Monitor and ensure project and program budget obligations are accomplished in a timely manner.
- Ensure committee and subgroups submit required report on accomplishments and budget status at mid-year, third quarter, and end-of-year.

## Taskings

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During discussions, collaboration efforts, reactions to emerging issues or responses to top-down mandates, NWCG groups may periodically identify the need for one or more of their subordinate groups to formally perform timely actions that are not in the subgroups' current plans of work.

If the work is appropriate for inclusion in an annual work plan, but time constraints don't allow waiting to include the work in a subsequent year's plan, then the work should be assigned through a tasking.

The process used to define and track a tasking assignment is the NWCG tasking process. A "task lead" is assigned to draft a written description (tasking memorandum) of the work to be performed, including its intent, parameters, and deliverables. Once the tasking memorandum has been formalized, the NWCG group, at the discretion of its leader, may be asked to review it for accuracy before it is delivered to the subordinate group for action.

The branch coordinator or branch manager for the tasked group will track the progress of the tasking from beginning to end and will keep the NWCG liaison updated on the progress of the tasking.

Upon completion of an assigned tasking, NWCG provides closure to the tasking by giving final approval that the task has been completed satisfactorily. This approval should be evidenced in writing (i.e., in meeting minutes or a decision document).

No organization or person outside of NWCG (i.e., National Multi-Agency Coordination (NMAC) Group, Fire Executive Council (FEC, DOI Office of Wildland Fire (OWF, Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC, Wildland Fire Information & Technology Program Board or other non-NWCG organization or person) may assign work of any type to a NWCG group. Requests for such work must be submitted to the NWCG Executive Board for approval and assignment.

## NWCG OPERATIONS

### General Meeting Information

This section (and subsections) provides guidance applicable to the meetings of all NWCG groups, including the executive board, committees, and other groups.

#### Meeting Purpose

The primary purpose of any NWCG group meeting is to utilize the skills and experience of group members for decision making based on the NWCG mission and guiding principles. Information sharing will be minimized during meetings and, to the extent possible, will be done by other means such as mailings and conference calls.

#### Meeting Schedules & Calendar

Meeting frequency will be determined based on purpose and need. A means to participate remotely should be provided for members unable to attend in person.

#### Meeting Locations

The selection of meeting locations should be based on the following criteria:

- **Participation:** Achieving maximum membership participation
- **Convenience:** Easy access to airports, hotels, meeting rooms, etc.
- **Economical:** Most reasonable based on total travel costs.
- **Purposeful:** Related purpose for conducting meetings in alternating regions or by alternating host agency, coordination with subgroup, stakeholder or related business event, or site visit.

Branch coordinators can provide guidance to a committee or other subgroup when preparing for a meeting.

#### Meeting Hosting & Logistics

The hosting agency or organization is responsible for arranging facilities. The group's chair is responsible for contacting and confirming of all group members and invited attendees.

#### Travel

Salary, travel, and incidental costs of representatives and committee members shall be borne by their respective agencies. Any extraordinary costs shall be covered by a written agreement among the agencies.

Travel costs (airfare, lodging, and per diem) for state representative members attending NWCG group meetings may be covered by funds administered by the NASF through a grant from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Such state travel funding will be provided, within the limits of the available funding, for state employees to travel to and from committee meetings. Travel in association with accomplishing a committee's program of work, such as attending another organization's meeting as the committee's representative, will be considered when requested if funds are available. All state travelers must be approved in advance by the NASF representative to the NWCG Executive Board; the state traveler must be on the current roster of the respective NWCG group for which they are traveling. (Appendix D, NASF State Traveler Guidelines).

## Meeting Attendees

Primary members should attend all group meetings. Primary members who are unable to attend a group meeting should make every attempt to ensure that their organization (or business area) is represented with an alternate participant. The alternate participant should be fully briefed and must have the authority to make binding decisions on the regular member's behalf.

Contractors and non-government organization (NGO) representatives may not serve as alternate representatives of government agencies.

In general, an NWCG group meeting is open to anyone who wishes to attend. However, the chair may restrict discussion to members and invited participants only. If seating is limited, priority will be given to group members and invited participants.

Depending on specific agenda topics, the chair may restrict attendance to primary members only for all or part of a meeting in an executive session.

When appropriate, individuals from outside the group membership may be requested to participate in all or part of a meeting to provide needed expertise.

## Meeting Agendas

Agendas will be provided to group members and to other stakeholders (such as branch coordinator, branch manager, or parent group) as appropriate.

Agenda items must originate from group members. Agenda items from subgroups will be coordinated between the subgroup chair and the group chair or member designated as liaison to the subgroup. Other agenda items, including those from a group's parent group, or branch coordinator or manager, will be coordinated through the group chair.

The chair will make the final decision to include or exclude agenda topics based on time constraints and business relevance. The preliminary agenda and all associated information for decisional items must be distributed to group members with adequate time for review prior to scheduled meetings. The chair may elect to add informational items to the agenda without prior notice.

## **Presentations**

Presentations made to a group should be clear, concise, and relevant. Once a presentation is concluded and issues clarified or questions answered, only the group members will discuss the issue and make any related decisions. The presenter may be asked to remain at the meeting to respond to subject matter questions and issues during the discussion.

Presenters should provide electronic copies of presentation and supplemental materials to the meeting chair, note taker or other designated person seven (7) days prior to the meeting. This will allow sufficient time for distribution and review materials prior to the meeting. When informational materials cannot be distributed in advance, copies may be distributed during the meeting at the discretion of the meeting chair. Presenter is responsible for providing printed copies sufficient for all attendees. The presenter should also provide an electronic copy, if possible, to the meeting chair, note taker, or other designated person so accurate and complete meeting notes can be maintained. Efforts should be made to ensure any meeting participants attending via teleconference or video conference are also provided with copies of the informational material.

## **Meeting Minutes**

Historical records are a key reference component for the success of the NWCG and its subgroups. Group chairs have the responsibility to assure notes/minutes are taken during each meeting and properly finalized and recorded. The minutes will serve as a permanent record of each proceeding; all documented decisions therein are considered final.

Minutes should not be a verbatim transcript, but must reflect the business conducted during the meeting and be complete, coherent, and accurate. Minutes must include the following: 1) date, time, and location of the meeting, 2) names of attending members and guests, 3) main topics of discussion, 4) all decisions made by the group, and 5) action items assigned.

The minutes will be approved and released for general distribution no later than the subsequent scheduled group meeting.

Members are responsible for distributing meeting minutes to keep their respective agencies and organizations informed of NWCG proceedings and decisions.



The group chair/lead will ensure the NWCG records management procedures are followed for appropriate creation, maintenance, and disposition of electronic and hardcopy meeting records.

## Action Items

Group meetings are intended to be productive working sessions. During the course of a meeting, certain efforts may be identified that require completion outside of the meeting. These efforts are referred to as “action items” and must be documented to clearly describe the work to be accomplished, the person(s) responsible for completion, and the completion target date. Group members responsible for an action item agree to apply due diligence to assigned activities and to make every effort to comply with due dates for completion.

The group chair has the responsibility to assure assigned activities are being addressed in a timely manner.

## NWCG Executive Board Meetings

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The following additional guidance is specific to NWCG Executive Board meetings. A quorum for conducting business shall be a minimum of two-thirds of the NWCG Executive Board primary members.

## Monthly Meetings

Executive Board monthly meetings are generally scheduled on the third Wednesday of each month and are held in Boise, Idaho. The following Thursday morning is reserved as an "overflow" day, if needed. Exceptions include meetings held during February, May, and October where an additional day (i.e. Tuesday) has been reserved for collaboration. Meetings in May and October may be held in other locations. Meeting dates may be changed with consensus by the Executive Board. These meetings are typically focused on interoperability issues and the development and approval of standards, guidelines, qualifications, and training solutions for them.

Primary members should attend all group meetings. Those who are unable to attend a group meeting should make every attempt to ensure that their organization (or business area) is represented with an alternate participant. The alternate participant should be fully briefed and must have the authority to make binding decisions on the regular member's behalf.

## Meeting Schedules

Meetings will be scheduled one (1) year in advance and a calendar of scheduled meetings will be maintained on the NWCG website.

An Annual Meeting with the Executive Board, the NWCG PMU, and the NWCG committee chairs may be conducted in February. This meeting would be held in Boise, Idaho, and hosted by the NWCG Program Management Unit.

The May and October meetings may be held in field locations and will be hosted by member organizations. The field locations should provide learning opportunities (discovering issues, challenges, and successes faced by that area) for the Executive Board, as well as exhibit NWCG's presence to the field.

The following list will be used as a guide for the rotation of host agency:

- U.S. Forest Service
- Intertribal Timber Council
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Fire Administration
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- National Association of State Foresters
- National Park Service
- International Association of Fire Chiefs

## Meeting Logistics

The hosting agency is responsible for arranging facilities for May and October meetings in coordination with the NWCG Administrative Assistant. The NWCG Administrative Assistant is responsible for arranging facilities for monthly and special meetings.

## Meeting Agendas

Agendas are developed in advance of meetings to allow adequate time for each topic to be fully staffed before the meeting. Generally, agendas are developed two (2) weeks prior to monthly meetings, unless the meeting requires more preparation. Agenda items should be requested prior to agenda development through an appropriate sponsor listed below.

Agenda items may be sponsored by:

- Executive Board member
- NWCG Manager
- Branch Coordinator or Branch Manager

The NWCG Administrative Assistant will collect possible and proposed agenda items. The Branch Coordinators, Training Branch Manager, Administrative Assistant, NWCG Manager, and the NWCG Chair or NWCG Vice-Chair will develop the agenda.

Agenda item requestors must submit electronic copies of any supporting documents (i.e. issue statement, white paper, tasking deliverable to the administrative assistant in advance of the meeting. For agenda items that include a presentation, the presenter should provide an electronic version of the presentation to the administrative assistant. All meeting materials will be then compiled and distributed to meeting participants one week prior to the meeting.

## **Meeting Purpose**

The primary purpose of any NWCG Executive Board meeting is to utilize the skills and experience of its members for wildland fire management leadership and decision making based on the NWCG mission and strategic guiding principles.

The Executive Board depends upon the branch coordinators, the Training Branch Manager, and the NWCG Manager to ensure that meeting agendas include only those items that have been well thought out and reviewed by appropriate peers.

## **Meeting Procedures and Presentations**

At the beginning of each meeting, the chair will review the agenda with the meeting attendees and make modifications as needed. By unanimous consent, the Executive Board may add unforeseen issues without prior notification. Typically these added items will be quick briefings on an emerging issue or informational items of interest to all.

The Executive Board chair will facilitate, or will appoint someone to facilitate, the meeting discussions and ensure the stated desired result for each agenda item is achieved.

The administrative assistant will record the meeting proceedings to document key discussion points, decisions and action items. Each action item will be assigned to an appropriate NWCG Executive Board member, Branch Coordinator, the Training Branch Manager, or the NWCG Manager for monitoring.

An action item will include:

- Description of the activity
- Expected deliverables
- Lead person and other key participants
- Due date(s)

All decisions and action items will be read aloud (by the meeting recorder/administrative assistant) once agreement appears to have been reached, to validate the decision or action is clearly understood and was correctly documented.

## Meeting Results

Each agenda item may result in one or more of the following decisions:

- **Approval/Disapproval:** Direction to proceed or not to proceed with proposal; approval of a deliverable, standard or product; approval of a proposed budget; or approval of a committee chair or roster
- **Action item assignment:** Direction to an Executive Board member, a Program Management Unit member, or a group chair to follow-up on an agenda item.
- **Deferred decision:** A decision to defer a decision for a subsequent meeting or to follow-up on an agenda item with a status update.

The NWCG Manager and Branch Coordinators/Manager will be responsible for communicating the results of the meeting to the appropriate groups, committees or subgroup chairs, or others as appropriate. Furthermore, the Branch Coordinators/Manager are also responsible for monitoring and follow-up reporting at subsequent NWCG meetings regarding assignments to the branches.

## Action Items

Action item additions and changes will be incorporated into an Action Item Tracking Table following a meeting. A meeting summary (including action items) will be distributed with the meeting minutes.

Prior to each regularly scheduled meeting, the Action Item Tracking Table will be reviewed by the NWCG Manager, Branch Coordinators, Training Branch Manager, Administrative Assistant, and the NWCG Chair.

## Meeting Minutes

A draft meeting summary (listings of decisions and action items) will be distributed to the Executive Board and PMU staff within two (2) working days after the conclusion of each meeting.

Draft meeting minutes will be distributed to the agenda item presenters for review and corrections within two (2) working days after the conclusion of each monthly meeting and within five (5) working days after a tri-annual meeting; corrections will be forwarded to respective branch coordinators or the NWCG Manager, depending on the topic, for incorporation into the final meeting minutes.

Upon receipt of corrections from the chair and vice chair, the administrative assistant will prepare the final draft minutes for distribution to the Executive Board prior to the next meeting for their review and approval.

## Standards

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NWCG creates intergovernmental standards of interoperability for use by its member organizations. These standards are provided in various formats and media collectively known as *Products*. NWCG does not create policy. Member organizations may choose to adopt NWCG standards as policy.

## Authority

NWCG is chartered by the federal Fire Executive Council, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Intertribal Timber Council to provide national leadership to develop, maintain, and communicate interagency standards, guidelines, qualifications, training, and other capabilities that enable interoperable operations among federal and non-federal entities.

Authority for NWCG committees to create interagency standards, guidelines, qualifications, and training comes through a delegation from the NWCG Executive Board to its committees. Standards created through this authority are considered established best practices that NWCG provides for its members.

## Stewardship

NWCG committees are assigned responsibility for stewardship over one or more areas of NWCG and wildland fire business. Standards necessary for intergovernmental interoperability within each business area are the responsibility of the appropriate committee, including development, collaborative review, and maintenance, as well as serving as business leads for those standards.

## Development

An NWCG standard is developed and revised over time to respond to a need within the business area. The development process may include research, data collection, development or review of the business need, developing and evaluating alternatives, drafting a proposal, internal and external reviews, and Executive Board approval.

## Approval

The NWCG Executive Board is responsible for approving all NWCG standards. The Executive Board may choose to delegate its responsibility to a committee for specific standards.

## Information Technology

NWCG and its subgroups represent the needs and requirements of the interagency, intergovernmental fire business community. Establishing data standards, defining requirements, and supporting technical solutions as Business Leads are important roles NWCG's groups and members play to achieve desired technical solutions in collaboration with the Wildland Fire Information & Technology organization.

As currently chartered, NWCG does not fund and implement Information Technology (IT) applications. This is the role of hosting agencies.

## Products

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Products is an all-encompassing term for anything produced by or on behalf of an NWCG group. These products are composed of standards and are provided in various formats and media. This may include, but is not limited to, documents, PowerPoint presentations or similar slide shows, videos (DVD, or other format), smart phone applications (Apps) and web pages. Documents are commonly guides or other forms of delivering an agreed-upon NWCG standard, including training materials and forms, but documents can also be about other information, such as project reports, newsletters, meeting minutes.

NWCG products are under the stewardship of specific NWCG groups. These groups work closely with their branch coordinator or manager and the products manager to define the development, maintenance, and review cycle for each product.

NWCG products are in the public domain. If copyrighted material is used within a product, written permission must be obtained for the use of such material. The owner of copyrighted material must understand that the information will be used within a public domain forum.

All products will be identified as National Wildfire Coordinating Group products with the NWCG logo. Only NWCG logos may be used on an NWCG product. "National Wildfire Coordinating Group", "NWCG", and the NWCG logo are trademarks of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and should be identified as such whenever used.

NWCG products are managed and supported by product services within the Program Management Unit. Product services provides planning and support services to product developers, coordinates product releases, and manages the distribution of products for the NWCG.

A list of NWCG products will be maintained in the Product Management System. The list will be distributed annually, usually in January, showing the stewardship group and indicating any changes such as revisions, eliminations or creations during the past calendar year.

## Product Criteria

NWCG published information: Any NWCG product that is made available outside the NWCG organization. NWCG information may be distributed electronically through an NWCG website or “hard-copy”, on a disc, or in any other accessible form. NWCG published information must meet the following minimum criteria:

Must be generic (non-agency specific) to all NWCG users and must meet NWCG objectives. It is the decision of NWCG whether a particular item is appropriate and technically accurate for NWCG sponsorship and distribution. Visuals, including slide (e.g., PowerPoint) presentations, photographs, and videos, should portray a broad range of representative agencies in the wildland fire community, along with representing the nation’s diverse work force. Visuals from only one agency may not fully indicate the interagency scope of the information.

Must be within the topic area of the designated NWCG stewardship group. The risk of producing mixed messages from NWCG exists. To mitigate such risk, a committee or other NWCG group should not produce or endorse information outside its business scope.

Must not be available from another agency or private concern. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group is not replacing the need for agency distribution of agency-specific information. Nor is it in competition with private business.

Must be technically accurate. This is accomplished through the appropriate reviews by the responsible NWCG groups.

Must be produced within appropriate NWCG product and format standards. This includes electronic document accessibility requirements and formats posted on the [www.nwcg.gov](http://www.nwcg.gov) site that may be downloaded and printed by field audiences.

Must have permission to use copyrighted material. Permission must be submitted with the master material. NWCG products are considered to be in the public domain, therefore if any copyrighted material is included, permission must be obtained in advance and the copyrighted content must be clearly identified as such.

### Additional Criteria for Products Distributed Through the NFES Caches

Must be a technical product intended for use by NWCG and the NWCG member agencies. Technical is defined as being meaningful and of use or interest to persons with specialized knowledge (i.e., agency employees) rather than addressing the layperson (i.e., public.)

Must have a minimum shelf life of one year. Shelf life of a product is a primary consideration. NWCG will not distribute through the NFES Caches products such as meeting notes,

newsletters, or computer software instructions that have a dynamic shelf-life with version updates occurring at unscheduled intervals. Items with a shelf-life of one year will be based on the calendar year, with revisions expected at or near the beginning of each calendar year. This aids users of the information to determine when the revisions will take place.

Note: NWCG is responsible for the buyout of obsolete, outdated, or erroneous printed products that are determined to be unsalable.

## Product Planning

Planning is necessary to develop NWCG products efficiently. The products manager will work with the committees to develop and maintain a complete product revision inventory: the revision cycle and production requirements for every NWCG product. An Annual Product Development Schedule will be developed based on this inventory and committee and Executive Board priorities.

Many support service skills beyond our expectations for SME committee members are necessary to develop a product, including technical writing, editing, disability (section 508) compliance, and often graphic arts, audio/visual media, and IT-related solutions.

Committees or other groups determine what kind of information, such as a standard, needs to be developed and work with product services to determine what media and format is best for delivering the message to the information users.

If a product, produced external to an NWCG committee, is brought to the attention of an NWCG committee for possible use, the committee may choose to review the product to determine if the information meets NWCG objectives and goals of the committee. The committee may then choose to endorse the product as submitted or use the information to aid in development of a different product.

Using the Annual Product Development Schedule, the product manager will provide necessary support to the committees' efforts by matching up committee product development requirements with appropriate support services. Support services are currently available through NWCG staff (PMU, including Training Branch), agency staff (primarily at Missoula and San Dimas T&D Centers), and contracts. NWCG funding is commonly used to acquire contract and T&D services in support of product development.

Committees with a product in the Annual Product Development Schedule conduct an initial planning meeting with their branch coordinator/manager, the products manager, and other stakeholders and support service providers, as appropriate, before beginning to work on the product. The goal of this meeting is to set expectations up front to improve transparency of this process and to minimize rejection of the final draft. Objectives of this meeting are to:



- Ensure adequate and appropriate coordination with stakeholders
- Assess and match development support needs with intended form of the product
- Establish the measures against which the final draft will be assessed to achieve publication.
- For example: electronic document accessibility (section 508 compliance)
- Issues to consider when planning to develop or revise a product include:
  - Human issues
  - Define roles and responsibilities and expectations
  - What does success look like (from each perspective)
  - Brainstorm objectives and desired final product
  - Process issues
  - Timelines or due dates
  - Approvals
  - Vetting across NWCG subgroups
  - On-going coordination with product services
  - File management, version control, and archiving
  - Leaving tracks for future revisions
  - Managing workloads and staffing
  - Technical issues
  - 508 compliance, posting to the web, is it an app, etc.
  - Technical edits
  - Formatting
  - NWCG formatting protocols (cover and title page template; video; CD; etc.)
  - Distribution methods
  - Coordinating with NFES Cache (printing, stocking)
  - Final product specifications (printing, binding, electronic, etc.)

All products will be prepared to be posted electronically on the NWCG website. Currently, the only exceptions are classroom-based training course materials and DVD videos. Field guides and pre-course work for classroom-based training courses will be posted.

If the information contained in a product becomes outdated, the NWCG committee with stewardship over the product should coordinate with product services to remove it from the published view. NWCG information on the website or printed and stocked in the cache should never be obsolete and useless to a user.

## **Additional Planning Considerations for Printed Products**

When planning a printed product, the group should keep it as simple as possible while keeping in mind the objectives and message. Saddle-stitch or perfect binding are usually the most cost-effective methods of binding books and booklets. Printed products should be designed for 8.5" x 11" or 5.5" x 8.5" finished size. Exceptions to this should be discussed with product services prior to formatting. Folded brochures do not adapt well to web posting – because a brochure is folded, the sides of the brochure do not read in order.

Photographs may be used if black and white, and are necessary to further explain or depict the message. Don't use color photographs or color ink (other than black) unless it is necessary to communicate the technical message to the reader. If the group has any questions, contact product services for guidance.

## **Courses & Training Materials**

All course and training material designed as instruction is coordinated with the Training Branch Manager. Development of training material sponsored by the NWCG follow the NWCG Curriculum Development Guide.

## **Videos**

Producing a video is as complex as writing a document. The same planning process should be used as for a printed product, except in the case of a video production, the storyboard is an integral development part.

A flowchart for video production is discussed in detail in the NWCG Curriculum Development Guide. Many of the NWCG agencies have video production specialists who can be tasked to produce a video. However, the storyboard, upon which the video production is based, is the group's responsibility.

## **Product Numbers**

NWCG products will be assigned a product number, depending on the type and subject matter of the product. Product numbers are assigned by stewards at appropriate stages of the product development.

NWCG training course numbers are under the stewardship of the Training Branch.

## **Course Numbering System**

The NWCG has an established alphanumeric course numbering system. Each alphanumeric combination designates a meaning unique to the specified curriculum.

The current NWCG-endorsed curricula are:

- **D** Dispatch Curriculum
- **FI** Fire Investigation Curriculum
- **G** Gap Curriculum
- **J** Job Aid
- **L** Leadership Curriculum
- **M** Management Curriculum
- **P** Fire Prevention Curriculum
- **RT** Reoccurring Training
- **RX** Prescribed Fire Curriculum
- **S** Wildfire Suppression Skills Curriculum
- **X** Other

The first digit of a course number designates the complexity level at which the course is designed to be presented and also indicates the organizational level at which the course is to be given.

- Entry Level
  - 100 – 200 = Local entry-level skills development
- Mid-Level
  - 300 – 400 = Mid-level and/or geographic area level management skills
- Advanced Level
  - 500 – 600 = Advanced-level or national-level management skills

The NWCG Development Unit assigns the appropriate complexity or organizational level designation to the course. Course number assignments are based on the formula listed above. Input from the Project Team after analysis of the target group, input from other NWCG committees, interest groups, and the field helps to determine the learning level applicable to the course.

The second digit of a course number designates the subject area of the course.

- **000** Command and General Staff
- **010** Skills
- **020** Organization
- **030** Operations
- **040** Planning
- **050** Logistics
- **060** Finance/Administration

- **070** Air Operations
- **080** General
- **090** Fire Behavior and Fire Danger Rating System

The third digit of a course number is assigned sequentially, or as appropriate to maintain continuity, as courses are certified within a particular subject area.

For more course numbering information, please see the [NWCG Field Manager's Course Guide](#), PMS 901-1.

NWCG ICS form numbers are under the stewardship of the National Response Framework – National Incident Management System (NRF-NIMS) Committee.

NWCG memoranda numbering is under the stewardship of the NWCG Administrative Assistant. The number format for memoranda is "M-YY-NNN", letter of correspondence is "L-YY-NNN", and tasking memoranda is "TM-YY-NNN", where "YY" is the calendar year and "NNN" is a sequential number. All memoranda, letter of correspondence and tasking memoranda will follow the same numbering schema starting from 001-999 with the corresponding identifier.

The NWCG Administrative Assistant also has stewardship over the format and numbering system for meeting minutes.

All other NWCG product numbers are under the stewardship of the NWCG Product Management System. "PMS" prefixed product numbers are assigned from the following schema:

- **000-099** Indexes and Glossaries
- **100-199** Operational System Description and Planning
- **200-299** System Organization, Function, and Procedures
- **300-399** Qualifications System
- **400-499** Operations
- **500-549** Aviation
- **550-599** Risk Management, Safety & Health
- **600-699** reserved
- **700-799** Public Relations
- **800-899** Research and Development
- **900-999** Administration
- **1000-1399** Reports to NWCG

## Product Standards

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### Federal Publication Standards

All printing by Federal agencies is accomplished through the Government Printing Office (GPO). GPO printing is mandated by the United States Congress through the Joint Committee on Printing, ("Government Printing and Binding Regulations", Joint Committee on Printing, Congress of the United States, No. 26, February 1990, available from Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402) and further enforced and defined by Department of Agriculture or Department of the Interior regulations and agency-specific regulations. All NWCG publications distributed by the NIFC- Great Basin Cache are printed through GPO.

The United States Government Printing Office Style Manual should be used as the basis for all editing. Almost all questions regarding capitalization, abbreviations, compound words, etc. can be answered using this guidance. The manual is available online from the GPO at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/stylemanual/index.html>.

The manual is available for purchase from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 or by on-line ordering from the GPO Bookstore at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov/>.

The GPO provides guidance for electronic file preparation in The Guidelines – Best Practices for Submitting Electronic Design and Prepress Files, available from GPO at [http://www.gpo.gov/pdfs/customers/sfas/3006\\_10\\_2004.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/pdfs/customers/sfas/3006_10_2004.pdf).

### NWCG Product Standards

Every NWCG product produced electronically, regardless of final distribution method, must comply with the accessibility requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d, as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220, August 7, 1998). The Act describes minimum interagency standards for compliance. Detailed information about the Act, and links to resources related to meeting the requirements of the Act, are available at GSA's Section 508 resources page at <http://www.section508.gov>. NWCG measures products for compliance to these minimum standards.

NWCG has produced guidance for meeting Section 508 criteria. This guidance is available at [http://www.nwcg.gov/508\\_guide/nwcg-procedures-guidelines.pdf](http://www.nwcg.gov/508_guide/nwcg-procedures-guidelines.pdf)

The NWCG Curriculum Development Guide is to be used when developing NWCG course materials. The following standards apply to all other NWCG products.

Every NWCG product will have a title that is concise. The title should reflect exactly what the product (document, video, form, etc.) is about. If the product gives guidance in a particular subject area, the word “guide” should be part of the title.

Every NWCG product will have an assigned publication date. This date (usually a year; occasionally a month and year) identifies the product edition.

Every NWCG product should identify the NWCG committee responsible for the development and maintenance of the product and its content. Included with this stewardship identification, should be NWCG contact information for users who may have questions or want additional information about the product or its content.

Every NWCG product should include information on where an authoritative copy may be obtained. For products available for download from a website, an appropriate NWCG website URL should be included. For products available for order from the Great Basin Cache, the NFES order number should be included.

Every NWCG product should include a statement indicating the NWCG has approved the content information. A statement of intended use should also be included; this should include a disclaimer of responsibility for inappropriate use.

Every NWCG product should include a statement regarding the public domain, copyrighted, or proprietary nature of the content information. Copyrighted content and proprietary information must be identified as such within the product. All copyrighted and proprietary content must have owner permission for use; such permission should be included in the product.

If trademarks, trade names, corporation or vendor names are used within the content information, an appropriate disclaimer regarding the intent and purpose for such use should be included.

Every NWCG product should be appropriately labeled with the NWCG name and logo. No other logos should be used. A statement regarding the use and trademarked nature of the NWCG name and logo should be included.

## **Title Page Content**

The following text may be used as a template to address the above requirements; the text should appear in the lower half of the title page. The final paragraph is optional if such names are not used within the product.

Sponsored for NWCG publication by the NWCG <<stewardship group name>>. Questions regarding content of this product may be directed to <<contact information>>. Questions and comments may also be emailed to [BLM\\_FA\\_NWCG\\_Products@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_FA_NWCG_Products@blm.gov).

Previous editions: <<list version years in descending order separated with commas; "none" if first edition>>

This product is available electronically from the NWCG site at <http://www.nwcg.gov>

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) has approved the contents of this product for the guidance of its member agencies and is not responsible for the interpretation or use of this information by anyone else.

It is NWCG's intent to specifically identify all copyrighted content used in NWCG products. All other NWCG information is in the public domain. Use of public domain information, including copying, is permitted. Use of NWCG information within another document is permitted, if NWCG information is accurately cited to the NWCG. The NWCG logo may not be used except on NWCG authorized information. "National Wildfire Coordinating Group", "NWCG", and the NWCG logo are trademarks of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

The use of trade, firm, or corporation names or trademarks in this product is for the information and convenience of the reader and does not constitute an endorsement by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group of any product or service to the exclusion of others that may be suitable.

## **Format Standards**

It is recommended that one font be used throughout a document. Times New Roman is a recommended font – it is easy to read and is available on many platforms (PC, Apple, etc). Fonts must be true type fonts. Specialized fonts do not cross platforms. Multiple fonts can create Section 508 errors and will not enhance the readability of the product

All documents will be designed with adequate margins suitable for web posting and, if applicable, printing. 1" margins should be used. This ensures no information will be cut off when printed or copied.

Covers will reflect the NWCG logo, title, date, and PMS number. An NFES number will be added only if printed and stocked for distribution through the cache. Authors' names will not be printed on the cover. Authors may listed on the title page or in a preface.

When PDF files of large documents are created for web posting, the PDF file should be bookmarked to facilitate browsing and ensure navigation through the document is user-friendly.

## CD-ROMs & DVDs

Discs will be labeled with title, PMS number, date, and NFES number if assigned. The jewel case cover will also have the NWCG logo, title, PMS number, date, and NFES number if assigned. The inside cover of the jewel case will contain instructions for the use of the disc. CD information will include software used.

## Videos

Videos will have the NWCG logo shown at the beginning of the video. The title should be shown next. The title may be accompanied by the tag line, "A presentation of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group." At the end of the presentation, the NWCG logo should be shown again with the words, "A presentation of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, sponsored by <<stewardship group name>>, <<year>>. <<PMS number>>. <<NFES number, if assigned>>." Specific credits should appear after this NWCG information. Videos need to be closed captioned for Section 508 compliance.

## Reports to NWCG

Reports to NWCG will be wrapped with a standard NWCG PMS cover and title page. The cover and title page will precede the report title with the series title, "Report to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group". The PMS publication date shown on the cover and title page will be the date of NWCG release and distribution, which may be a later date than the report date. Applicable letters of transmittal (NWCG approval or distribution memoranda) may be included following the title page.

## NWCG Logo Standards

NWCG consists of multiple partners working together to provide more efficient and effective wildland fire management. For many years, the logo of NWCG has symbolized this teamwork and endures today to signify quality, cooperation, and stability within the wildland fire community. The logo demonstrates the collective endorsement of all the NWCG partner agencies.

To maintain the high degree of merit associated with the NWCG logo, the following standards of use are defined:

- Use of the NWCG logo must be in support of the NWCG mission and portray a positive image of NWCG.



- The NWCG logo must be legible, recognizable, and annotated with the “TM” symbol outside the lower right portion of the logo. Contact the PMU for official NWCG logos.
- All NWCG products will display the NWCG logo.
- The NWCG logo will be the only logo to appear on NWCG memorandums signed by the NWCG Chair.
- No individual NWCG member agency logo will be used with the NWCG logo.
- If an NWCG product is produced in cooperation and collaboration with another country, the logo and identification of the other country may also be used.
- The NWCG logo will be the dominant logo on memoranda and subgroup web pages.
- Specific, individual agency-endorsed products or documents will not display the NWCG logo.
- NWCG Subgroup Logos
- NWCG subgroups may create and use their own logo.
- The NWCG Logo Board will approve all subgroup logos.
- Only approved logos will be used.
- All logos associated with NWCG subgroups will be electronically filed in the official NWCG records database.
- Any new subgroup logos must meet the following logo development standards. Existing logos will be reviewed by the NWCG Logo Board and updated to these standards on an as-needed basis.
- Logo Development Standards for web Use
- 72 dpi, maximum
- Section 508 compliant, including alternate text describing the logo
- RGB colors
- Should include a black-and-white or greyscale version
- Generally, use a .jpg file type (compatible with most programs, is easiest to use, produces the smallest file size)
- For situations where a transparent background is needed, use .png or .gif
- 640 x 640 pixels dimension

If using a photo:

- Consider the media that the photo will be used on (e.g., a photo can't be embroidered)
- Must have full permission to use the photo
- Animated logos are acceptable to use if they meet all other standards
- Logo Development Standards for Print Use
- Examples of print use include posters, publications, brochures, letterhead, mugs, etc.
- 300 dpi, maximum

- CMYK colors
- Should include a black-and-white or greyscale version
- file type: .tiff
- Should be scalable
- Dimensions should be appropriate for the media being printed on. The larger the print size, the larger the dimensions should be.
- If the above logo guidance is in conflict with NWCG partner agency logo policy, the agency policy must be followed. Any use of the NWCG logo beyond what is outlined in this guidance must be authorized in writing from the NWCG Chair.

## NWCG Forms

NWCG may develop forms and they are often used as a job aid, checklist, or tool kit reminder.

Forms are officially used for information collection. Questions to consider in development include: What entity will receive the information and what is done with the information collected via a form?

ICS forms are under the stewardship of DHS/FEMA. The NWCG NRF-NIMS Committee has stewardship over the “wildland fire” (WF) versions of ICS forms.

Forms used on an interagency basis, particularly those that collect financial information, may be best sent to GSA for the Optional Form (OF) or Standard Form (SF) designation.

There have been instances when an NWCG committee would like to test a form before submitting to GSA for posting and stocking. In this instance, the form should be designated as a “test form” with the committee’s designation as part of the “form number”. A date will need to be determined as the form date, but also a date will need to be determined for the end of the test period.

As a minimum, NWCG forms will have a form number, date, and title. NFES catalog numbers are assigned for ordering purposes when stocked at the NFES caches.

Electronic versions of forms are becoming the preferred way of doing business. Three approaches to electronic forms are in popular use:

The form is designed to be completed on-line, when submitted the information (data content) is directed to a central site or database. There usually is no paper copy.

The form is available on-line, but entering data is not possible. The user prints the form and uses the printed copy like other paper forms.

The form is designed as a word processing template. The user can enter form data and then save the form as an electronic document. The saved document can be used as any other electronic document would be used.

The form number, date and NFES catalog number (when applicable) should appear in the form footer in this format:

ICS 123 WF (1/14) NFES 004567

The footer should be aligned to the left margin; the form number and prefix are followed by a single space; publication month and year are separated by a forward slash and are enclosed in parentheses when applicable, the six-digit NFES number appears to the left or beneath the form designation.

## Approval and Publication

The NWCG Executive Board is responsible for approving all NWCG products. The Executive Board may choose to delegate its responsibility to a committee for specific products.

The NWCG group with stewardship over the product is responsible for ensuring the appropriateness and completeness of the product.

The group chair or lead should ensure the product has been reviewed by the group's members and other agency representatives, as appropriate, and approved by the group. The group chair or lead should forward the product through the parent committee, when applicable, to the respective Branch Coordinator or Manager. The Branch Coordinator or Manager is responsible for ensuring that other NWCG groups and branches, if applicable, have also had adequate reviews and input.

Only the NWCG Manager, the Training Branch Manager, or a Branch Coordinator may submit an approved product for publication. This is accomplished by electronic request from the Branch Coordinator or Manager to product services. A committee's publication request should originate from the chair of the steward committee to the Branch Coordinator or Manager. The product submittal and publication request should certify:

- the criteria established at the initial planning meeting have been met
- the appropriate reviews have been done and agencies have agreed to the product's content; and
- the committee chair and the Branch Coordinator or Training Branch Manager are approving the product for release and publication.

- Depending on the product medium and whether the product is to be web-only distribution or stocked for cache distribution, additional materials need to accompany the publication request.
- For products to be posted on the web, include:
  - original (source) files and
  - PDF files.
- For products to be printed and stocked for cache distribution, include:
  - hard copy "mock up" of the document,
  - PDF files,
  - GPO form 952, and
  - original (source) files. Note: for documents developed in InDesign® or other approved desktop publishing environments, submit a CD containing the electronic source files; CD should be marked with software and version used to create.
- For CD-ROMs or DVDs to be duplicated and stocked for cache distribution, include:
  - master disc, and
  - a CD that contains only the information and artwork for the jewel case cover and inside cover, and the disc label.

The PMU product services has responsibility to retain master materials entered into the NWCG Product Management System, with the exception of course material developed by the Training Branch and to archive the obsolete material.

## Product Distribution

New products are released through NWCG memorandum. With some exceptions, subsequent revisions are announced less formally through sponsoring committee channels.

The NWCG website at <http://www.nwcg.gov> is intended to contain or have links to all NWCG published information.

Some wildland fire prevention education material is distributed through the NFES Cache at Grand Rapids, MN, which also distributes USDA FS Smokey Bear products. Their website is at <http://www.symbols.gov>

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) works closely with the Wildland Urban Interface Mitigation Committee on developing new items for information. The NFPA-sponsored Firewise Web site at <http://www.firewise.org> provides information for this group. Some items are also distributed by NFPA and some are distributed through the Great Basin Cache at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC).

For information produced by an agency or other NWCG cooperator that may be of interest to other NWCG members, links have been set up to aid the user in moving from one site to another related site. This helps prevent duplication and reduces redundancy.

The Great Basin Cache receives most of the NWCG documents that need to be published and made available hard copy. The four distinct functions accomplished within the Great Basin Cache regarding NWCG publications are:

- Accepting new items from the NWCG Product Management System, assigning NFES (ordering) numbers, and procuring items for stocking.
- Maintaining stock on existing items in coordination with NWCG product services.
- Planning for and accommodating revisions or elimination of stock at least cost, in coordination with NWCG product services.
- Providing a method of accepting, processing and shipping orders
- Providing an annual catalog listing the stock available and the ordering procedure.
- Communications
- A primary communications objective for NWCG is to raise awareness of its products and make them available.

## Communication Planning

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The NWCG Communication Plan identifies key audiences, communication goals, objectives, and strategies to inform the diverse wildland fire community regarding key NWCG actions. This plan is being updated and revised, and will be included in the next version of this document.

## Communication Products

Standardized communication products will be made available for use by the NWCG Executive Board, PMU staff, and NWCG groups for presentations to stakeholders. These products include quarterly newsletters, annual reports, PowerPoints, and project-specific briefings. Templates for white papers, letters, memoranda, and other tools are available. For more information on these products, contact the NWCG communications specialist.

## Information Sharing

All electronic NWCG public information will be posted on the NWCG website at <http://www.nwcg.gov/>. Such information includes:

- Standards, policies and procedures
- Training materials
- NWCG memoranda
- NWCG organization information for each group, including the Executive Board:

- Charter
- Strategic intent
- Roster/contact information
- Meeting calendar
- Meeting minutes (summaries, decision log, etc.)
- Recent annual reports

## **NWCG Email Addresses and Accounts**

Non-personal email addresses and accounts for NWCG can provide consistent and stable points of contact between NWCG and its stakeholders.

The Program Management Unit (PMU) manages all NWCG email accounts. The PMU is responsible for authorizing the creation of accounts and is responsible for the on-going tracking and management of all NWCG accounts.

Each account will have a designated primary and backup person assigned to monitor and respond to email as it is received.

Requests for an NWCG email account should be submitted to the PMU. If the account is authorized by the PMU, it will be submitted to the appropriate email/network administrator for creation.

Requests should include:

- Business functional area – describe the functional area for which the email account will be used.
- Purpose and expected use – describe the anticipated use of the account. How will it be used for internal (to NWCG) communications; how will it be used for external (to NWCG) communications.
- Stewardship group – which NWCG group will have stewardship over the account.
- Proposed monitors – identify the proposed primary and proposed backup persons who will be monitoring the email address. These monitors should be representatives of the stewardship group.
- Address publication plan – describe where the address will appear. How will NWCG stakeholders know the address is available, and how will they know when to use it?

## **Interagency Cooperation – Collaborative Decisions**

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The NWCG Executive Board empowers each NWCG group to make decisions and advocate those decisions to the group's respective parent group. Issues requiring a decision may be

brought to a group by a member of the group, through the group's respective Branch Coordinator, Branch Manager, or through the group's chair.

Typically, NWCG decisions must be implemented by each member organization in order to be effective; therefore, time must be allowed during the decision making for due deliberation by the affected agencies and organizations. However, issues requiring more urgent decisions, such as security or safety and health issues will be expedited by the group.

Issues requiring decision should be documented and presented, along with appropriate reference and background material, to other group members prior to a meeting.

Decision making by NWCG groups is by consensus of the primary membership. The chair will facilitate the consensus process.

Consensus decision making does not require unanimous or unqualified agreement by members; however, consensus does require every member be able and willing to support the decision of the group. During the decision making process, each member of a group takes responsibility to air dissenting opinions for group consideration and deliberation, and most importantly to provide an alternative solution where there is disagreement. When a member holds a dissenting position, but is willing and able to support the position of the remainder of the group, that member has the right to have their position documented for the record.

For non-trivial decisions made during scheduled meetings, all primary member agencies, organizations or functional areas not represented at the meeting will be contacted for their concurrence. "Non-trivial" will be determined at the time of the discussion during the meeting.

Once consensus has been reached, all members agree to support the group's decision. Once meeting minutes have been finalized, decisions are considered final.

In some cases, member agencies and organizations may find it necessary to vary the decision to fit within their respective rules and regulations. Regarding abstention: Consensus requires the participation of all primary members – rather than abstaining, a participant can express a neutral ("it doesn't matter to me") position, but must still be involved and able to support the decision. One main point of consensus is to avoid future stances of, "I wasn't involved in the decision, so I don't have to support it".

## **Issue Resolution**

If a member feels so strongly that agreement is unattainable, the issue may be tabled until the next meeting or until a more acceptable decision can be attained.

When no consensus can be reached within the meeting (or other appropriate) time frame, a small subgroup of members may be assigned to develop a recommendation for the full group's consideration.

If consensus still cannot be achieved, an issue paper will be created and escalated to the group's parent group, Branch Coordinator or Branch Manager for resolution.

### **Collaborative Workspace**

Groups may use collaborative workspace to facilitate communication among the group membership.

A Community may be established by a group on the Lessons Learned website at <http://wildfirelessons.net/home> maintained by the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center at the National Advanced Fire and Resources Institute (NAFRI). Appropriate notice should be given to members when items are posted to the site for review or comment.

Information posted on this site should be considered in "draft form"; the site should not be used as a repository for official records, nor should it be considered to be a permanent system of records. At this time, the Lessons Learned collaborative space is the primary location for internal sharing and discussion of documents and issues by NWCG groups.



## NWCG ORGANIZATION MANAGEMENT

### Organization Review

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The NWCG organization is reviewed internally during the Annual meeting, as needed.

### Featured Committee Events

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Periodic “Featured Committee” events bring committees and the Executive Board together and complement the current lines of communication. The Branch Coordinators and Branch Manager will work to schedule featured committee events throughout the year based on availability, relevance and value.

### Records Management

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The NWCG partnering agencies have agreed to work together and support each other in the national effort to make improvements in the filing, maintenance, use, and archiving of records created as a result of the collective efforts of the NWCG Executive Board and its subgroups. A Memorandum of Understanding for Coordination and Cooperation for Management of NWCG Records between the partnering agencies has been established to serve this purpose. NWCG has been assigned Record Group Allocation number 583.

The Schedule of Disposition for NWCG records has been approved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and provides guidance regarding the organization and disposition of records used to conduct NWCG business. It can be found here:

[http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/rcs/schedules/independent-agencies/rg-0583/n1-583-12-001\\_sf115.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/rcs/schedules/independent-agencies/rg-0583/n1-583-12-001_sf115.pdf)

## Appendix A NWCG Organization Chart

Content coming soon.

## Appendix B NWCG Charter

# National Wildfire Fire Coordinating Group Charter

November 19, 2013

## Charter

### Name

The name of this group is the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, hereinafter referred to as the NWCG.

### Purpose

NWCG provides national leadership to develop, maintain, and communicate interagency standards, guidelines, qualifications, training, and other capabilities that enable interoperable operations among federal and non-federal entities. NWCG will facilitate implementation of approved standards, guidelines, qualifications and training.

### Functions:

- Develops and proposes standards, guidelines, training, and certification for interagency wildland fire operations.
- Maintains approved standards, guidelines, training, and certification for interagency wildland fire operations.
- Participates in the development of operational standards and procedures for non-fire incident and emergency management to ensure consistency and interoperability.

### Membership

Membership on NWCG consists of one representative from:

US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

- Fire and Aviation Management
- Wildland Fire Management Research, Development, and Application

US Department of the Interior

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service

US Department of Homeland Security

- Federal Emergency Management Agency, US Fire Administration

Non-Federal Entities

- Intertribal Timber Council
- National Association of State Foresters
- International Association of Fire Chiefs

The Director of the Office of Wildland Fire in the Department of the Interior may appoint a representative to serve as an *ex officio* member of the NWCG in order to provide liaison and coordination with respect to development of proposed standards, policies, guidelines, or other materials that may require review or approval before becoming Department of the Interior policy.

## **Organization**

The NWCG will function as a collaborative entity to accomplish its purpose and responsibilities. The NWCG may establish standing and *ad hoc* committees, teams, or other similar groups as necessary. The purpose of any such groups is to develop, propose, and maintain efficient, coordinated standards, guidelines, qualification and training among the federal and non-federal fire management organizations.

The Chair of any committee shall be selected by a vote of the NWCG. Membership shall be invited from member organizations and other organizations having the expertise and interest in the particular subject matter.

## **Governance**

The NWCG is accountable to, and receives direction and guidance from, the Fire Executive Council (through the Fire Management Board), National Associate of State Foresters, and the Intertribal Timber Council and provides recommendations and advice on interagency standards, guidelines, qualifications, training, and other capabilities that enable interoperable operations among federal and non-federal entities. The FEC, FMB, NASF and ITC may adjudicate any issues that cannot be resolved by the NWCG.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Chair of the NWCG will rotate among the members, serving a two year term that begins in January of each even numbered year. The Chair is responsible for scheduling meetings as necessary to carry out the NWCG's responsibilities. Additional business protocols may be adopted by NWCG to facilitate efficient operation.

The Chair may call and conduct meetings, establish subgroups, and submit NWCG recommendations to member agencies and other entities for action, and sign NWCG correspondence. The Chair shall determine meeting agendas, submit necessary briefing papers and reports, and have minutes prepared for each meeting and distributed to the members.

In addition, the Chair may represent NWCG at FEC, NASF, ITC, or other meetings and events as appropriate.

The NWCG may select a Vice-Chair from amongst its members to serve a two year term that begins in January of each even numbered year. The Vice-Chair performs the duties of the Chair when the Chair is not available or as requested by the Chair.

### **Members**

NWCG members are expected to attend meetings and actively participate in the discussions. Members are encouraged to contribute to the development of meeting agendas and are expected to communicate the activities of the NWCG to their organizations. When necessary, members may designate a representative to attend

NWCG meetings on their behalf. Any such representative should be fully cognizant of the functions and activities of the NWCG and have full authority to make decisions on behalf of their principal. Members are encouraged to minimize the use of representatives to ensure consistency and continuity in the business of the NWCG.

### **Executive Secretary**

The Chair may appoint an Executive Secretary to assist in the development of meeting agendas, and meeting logistics. The Executive Secretary will record the proceedings of the NWCG by documenting the decisions and actions. The Executive Secretary is also responsible for distributing and communicating information about NWCG and for keeping and securing permanent records of the meetings.

## **Meeting Administration**

### **Operating Principles, Guidelines, and Procedures**

The NWCG shall have an operating plan to provide protocols and procedures for conducting NWCG business.

### **Meetings**

The NWCG shall meet monthly or as necessary to conduct business. Three times annually, meetings shall focus on standards, guidelines, and training and certification issues in interagency wildland fire operations. The Group shall also meet upon the call of the Chair at a location to be determined by the Chair.

### **Decision Making**

A quorum for conducting business shall be a minimum of two-thirds of the members. Decisions will be based on a consensus of those members present. All decisions will be recorded.

## **Approval**

This Charter is effective on the date of approval of undersigned officials and shall remain in effect until revised or revoked by one or more of those officials.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-Chair, Fire Executive Council

11/14/13  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

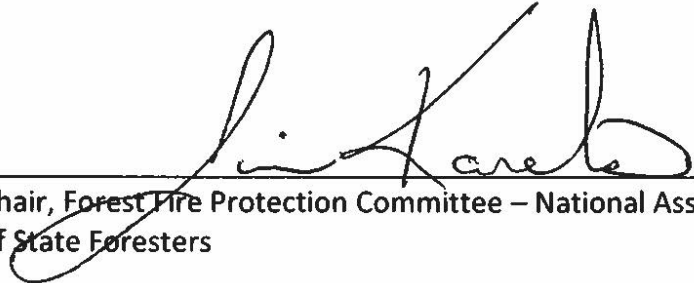
Figure 1: Jim Douglas, Co-Chair, Fire Executive Council



\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-Chair, Fire Executive Council

11/12/13  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Figure 2: Dan Olson for Tom Harbour, Co-Chair, Fire Executive Council




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Chair, Forest Fire Protection Committee – National Association  
of State Foresters

11/19/13  
Date

Figure 3: Jim Karels, Chair, Forest Fire Protection Committee – National Association of State Foresters



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President, Intertribal Timber Council

12-12-13  
Date

Figure 4: Phillip Rigdon, President, Intertribal Timber Council

## Appendix C Decommission Checklist

### Decommissioning an NWCG Group

This checklist is for use with the guidance presented the NWCG Operating Principles and Guidelines, PMS 900.

#### Actions

**The following must be completed before decommissioning of a group is considered final:**

- Brief parent group and the NWCG Program Management Unit (PMU) on known or potential impacts of the decommissioning.
- Reassign stewardship responsibilities
  - Transfer all records and documents to the NWCG records manager for disposition.
  - Reassign stewardship for current products.
  - Transfer product source files to product management.
  - Reassign other stewardship responsibilities, if any.
  - Transfer any other artifacts to the PMU (other artifacts may include physical objects or items such as awards presented to the group).
  - Brief groups, if any, on newly assigned stewardship responsibilities
- Remove Web and social media presence
  - Archive group's pages from NWCG portal and any social media sites.
  - Redirect users to an appropriate NWCG webpage(s).
  - Remove or redirect associated links from other webpage(s).
- Redirect correspondence
  - Redirect e-mail or other electronic correspondence to an existing contact or group (i.e. adjust group mailing lists or remove/redirect group mailboxes).
  - Redirect postal and parcel mail to an existing contact or group.
- Decommission all subordinate subgroups.
- Notify the group's stakeholders of the decommissioning (stakeholders include parent group, member organizations, and member representatives).
- Address any other known impacts of the decommissioning.
- Document and distribute copies of the decision to decommission



## Appendix D NASF State Traveler Guidelines



### NASF TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) is in a position to sponsor limited travel to various meetings, conferences and seminars and to manage federal grants that also include travel. All travel must either be connected with forestry-related activities of NASF, be included in contractual agreements with NASF or under the federal travel grant of the U.S. Forest Service. The following guidelines apply to all members of NASF (or their designated representative), employees of NASF, CIMC and NWCG authorized travelers, and persons entered into contracts with NASF.

Upon completion of travel the travel voucher must be submitted to the Director of Finance, Grants & Administration for reimbursement by check. The voucher should be submitted within ten (10) days of completing travel. All receipts submitted must be in the name of a person who is eligible for NASF travel reimbursement.

The following guidelines will apply to all persons who travel and are eligible for NASF reimbursement:

**ADVANCES:** Advance travel funds may be obtained by submitting a request with an estimate of travel expenses. A telephone request may be made but a written request must be received in order for a check to be issued. If the actual travel expenditures are in excess of the advance a reimbursement voucher should be submitted. Receipts and tickets must be submitted within 10 days after travel is completed to be filed with advance requests.

**AIRLINES:** Airline ticket must accompany the expense voucher. NASF strongly encourages the purchase of the most economical ticket and if there is a considerable savings for travel over a Saturday night NASF will pay for lodging and meals at the meeting site for the extra day. Advance purchases are encouraged to utilize lower airfares.

**CAR RENTAL:** Unless prior approval has been given car rental is not allowed except for a bonafide emergency. Emergency situations should be noted on reimbursement voucher.

**LODGING:** Actual cost of lodging will be reimbursed with receipts. NASF strongly encourages the use of government rates for lodging.

**MEALS:** Actual cost of meals, not to exceed \$60.00 per day, will be reimbursed while in travel status. Receipts are not necessary (do not include meals included in airfare).

**PRIVATELY OWNED AUTO:** Use of a personal auto for direct round-trip travel may be reimbursed at the rate of .50 cents per mile reimbursement is limited to actual needs to accomplish NASF business and reasonable needs for personal subsistence, i.e. travel to restaurants. Include exact mileage on voucher. Mileage reimbursement with in route

lodging cannot exceed the rate for economical airfare.

**REGISTRATION FEES:** All fees for approved meetings will be reimbursed with a receipt or copy of registration form.

**TAXI and GROUND TRANSPORTATION:** The cost of taxi and ground transportation will be reimbursed. Individual trip costs above \$15.00 must be accompanied by a receipt. Taxi and ground transportation reimbursement is limited to actual needs to accomplish NASF business and reasonable needs for personal subsistence, i.e. travel to restaurants.

All other expenses such as parking charges, unplanned office supplies and copying will be reimbursed with a receipt and statement explaining expense. **Upon completion of all travel Reimbursement**

**Vouchers are to be sent to:**

Accounting Office  
National Association of State Foresters  
444 North Capitol Street, NW Suite 540  
Washington, DC 20001

Effective  
10/01/2013